VISIT…

CAVE OF THE SPIDERS

A Short Adventure for Four 9th-Level Player Characters

CREDITS

Design: Skip Williams
Editing: Penny Williams
Typesetting: Nancy Walker
Cartography: Dennis Kauth and Rob Lazzaretti
Web Production Julia Martin
Web Development: Mark A. Jindra
Graphic Design: Sean Glenn, Cynthia Fliege

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Cave of the Spiders is a short adventure for four 9th-level player characters (PCs). This scenario can be used as the climax of a hostage-rescue mission, or it can simply be a site-based adventure that the PCs stumble across at the right moment.

The scenario is set in a temperate wilderness area, and the action takes place in the lair of a group of most unusual bandits. As always, feel free to adapt the material presented here as you see fit to make it work with your campaign.

PREPARATION

You (the DM) need the D&D core rulebooks—the *Player's Handbook,* the *Dungeon Master's Guide,* and the *Monster Manual*—to run this adventure. This scenario utilizes the D&D v.3.5 rules.

To get started, print out the adventure. Read through the scenario at least once to familiarize yourself with the situation, threats, and major NPCs (particularly their motivations).

Text that appears in shaded boxes is player information that you can read aloud or paraphrase for the players at the proper times. The details of the new monsters and magic items used in *Cave of the Spiders* are located in appendices at the end of the adventure.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The aranea known as Mettik is a particularly crafty and greedy member of his race, and thoroughly evil to boot. Not long ago, he used his considerable persuasive skills to bring together a band of fellow araneas of like mind. These creatures used their shapeshifting skills to infiltrate several woodland communities and commit a wide variety of crimes, from simple burglaries to kidnapping for ransom. With the proceeds from those crimes, they built an even larger group of fulltime bandits, with bugbear warriors and monstrous spiders for muscle. Since then, they have been ravaging the countryside in earnest.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

The PCs must penetrate the bandit lair and slay Mettik to remove the threat to the nearby civilizations. To do so, they must fight their way past numerous bugbear, ettercap, and aranea guards, as well as several monstrous spiders.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

If your PCs aren't in the habit of exploring every mysterious cave mouth they find, consider using one of the following adventure hooks to draw them into the action.

- While traversing a woodland highway, the PCs come upon a wrecked caravan. The remains of smashed wagons lie everywhere, and desiccated carcasses of draft animals, bound up in webbing as thick as rope, litter the road.

- The characters have found the remains of a caravan that Mettik's group recently attacked. The caravan was delivering goods to a merchant named Genevieve de Guare (see area 6). The bandits have covered their trail, but a persistent group of adventurers can track them back to their lair with little difficulty.

- While visiting a woodland town or village, the PCs either witness a kidnapping or just happen to be present when it happens. The locals are quick to suggest that the PCs locate the kidnapper's lair. Alternatively, if the PCs foil the crime and apprehend the culprits, their prisoners tell them about the treasure that their boss, Mettik, has accumulated recently.

- The PCs come upon an elf bound in a silken cocoon and hanging upside down from a tree. Perhaps this hapless individual is a genuine victim, or perhaps he is really an aranea who is just waiting to dump a *charm person* spell on a would-be rescuer. In either case, one or two araneas, along with an ettercap and a couple of huge monstrous spiders, wait nearby to attack the party. PCs who defeat these bandits can easily track them back to their lair.

BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE

Cave of the Spiders is a site-based adventure that takes place within a cave complex. The adventure begins when the characters reach the lair of the bandits (see area 1, below).

THE LAIR

The map provided for this adventure doesn't include a grid or a scale. Expand it so that it fills a sheet of 8 1/2" × 11" paper and assume a scale of 1 inch equals 20 feet.

The map shows an interconnected series of natural chambers hollowed out by wind and water. Changes in the climate and the water table over the years have left the complex mostly dry. Unless otherwise stated in the text for a specific area, the cave's major features are as follows.

Walls: The cavern walls are natural stone, with a climb DC of 20.

Ceilings: The ceilings are 10 to 20 feet high. Because the map shows the cave complex as a side view, it's fairly easy to estimate ceiling heights in individual chambers and passageways.

Corridors: Areas described as corridors are 20 feet wide and 15 feet high.

Floors: The cavern floors are made of natural stone and are fairly rugged. Because movement is hampered on these surfaces, movement costs are doubled, and the DC for Balance and Tumble checks increases by +5. Running or charging isn't possible.

The areas that have plank floors are both shown on the map and noted in the text. Though the planking is smooth, it's also damp and slightly slippery, so the DC for Balance and Tumble checks increases by +5. Running or charging is possible across the planks. The planking is fairly thin, so characters can easily damage it—deliberately or otherwise.

Plank Floors: 4 in. thick; hardness 5; hp 40; break DC 25.

Ladders: A few areas are fitted with ladders that connect the various levels within the complex. Just about anyone can climb these ladders, but doing so still requires a DC 0 Climb check.

Ladder: 2 in. thick; hardness 5; hp 20; break DC 23.

Light: The denizens of the caves rely primarily on their darkvision to see, and no areas are lit except where noted.

1. ENTRANCE (EL 9)

The cave complex lies behind a cliff face that soars to about 200 feet above the ground. The opening, about 20 feet above the surrounding forest floor, faces west. The 60-foot-long slope leading up to it is mostly clear of vegetation but covered with scree.

> The forest abruptly gives way to a long slope covered with loose rocks and scraggly bushes. A sheer cliff, about as tall as a good bowshot, rises from the top of the slope.

To reach the cave opening, characters must either fly or traverse the slope. See page 89 in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for the effect of the scree.

The cave mouth is 25 feet wide. Beyond it lies a level space about 40 feet wide and 45 feet long, and beyond that is an exit to the east. The corridor leading from the exit slopes up for 20 feet, requiring a DC 10 Climb check to ascend.

Creatures: Three bugbear guards and an aranea sergeant always stand watch here.

Bugbear Guards: Male or female bugbear warrior 3; CR 4; Medium humanoid (goblinoid); HD 6d8; hp 27; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 20, touch 12, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +5; Grp +8; Atk or Full +10 melee (1d8+4, *+1 morningstar*) or +8 ranged (1d8+3/[TS]3, masterwork composite longbow [+3 Str bonus]); SQ darkvision 60 ft., scent; AL CE; SV Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +2; Str 17, Dex 15, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 7.

Skills and Feats: Climb +7, Hide +5, Jump +5, Listen +4, Move Silently +7, Spot +4; Alertness, Dodge, Weapon Focus (morningstar).

Languages: Common, Goblin.

Possessions: Masterwork chain shirt, masterwork buckler, *+1 morningstar,* masterwork composite longbow (+3 Str bonus) with 20 arrows.

Aranea: CR 4; Medium magical beast (shapechanger); HD 3d10+6, hp 22; Init +6; Spd 50 ft., climb 25 ft.; AC 13, touch 12, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +3; Grp +3; Atk or Full Atk +5 melee (1d6 plus poison, bite) or +5 ranged (0, web); SA poison, spells, web; SQ change shape, darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +4; Str 11, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Climb +14, Concentration +8, Escape Artist +5, Jump +13, Listen +6, Spot +6; Improved Initiative, Iron Will[B], Weapon Finesse.

Poison (Ex): Injury, Fortitude DC 13, initial damage 1d6 Strength, secondary damage 2d6 Strength.

Spells: An aranea casts spells as a 3rd-level sorcerer. It prefers illusions and enchantments and avoids fire spells.

Web (Ex): In spider or hybrid form (see Change Shape, below), an aranea can cast a web up to six times per day. This ability is similar to an attack with a net but has a maximum range of 50 feet, with a range increment of 10 feet, and is effective against targets of up to Large size.

The web anchors the target in place, allowing no movement. An entangled creature can escape with a successful DC 13 Escape Artist check or burst the web with a successful DC 17 Strength check. The web has 6 hit points, 0 hardness, and takes double damage from fire.

Change Shape (Su): An aranea's natural form is that of a Medium monstrous spider. It can assume two other forms. The first is a unique Small or Medium humanoid; an aranea in its humanoid form always assumes the same appearance and traits, much as a lycanthrope does. The second form is a Medium spider-humanoid hybrid. Changing form is a standard action.

In humanoid form, the aranea gains all the abilities of the form and has that form's speed. (For example, an aranea in dwarf form has dwarven racial traits.) The aranea keeps its ability scores and can cast spells, but it cannot use webs or poison in humanoid form. In hybrid form, an aranea looks like a Medium humanoid at first glance, but a successful DC 18 Spot check reveals the creature's fangs and spinnerets. The aranea can use weapons and webs in this form. The speed of an aranea in hybrid form is 30 feet.

An aranea remains in one form until it chooses to assume a new one. A change in form cannot be dispelled, nor does the aranea revert to its natural form when killed. A *true seeing* spell, however, reveals its natural form if it is in humanoid or hybrid form.

Sorcerer Spells Known (6/6 per day; caster level 3rd): 0—*acid splash* (+5 ranged touch), *daze* (DC 12), *detect magic, ghost sound* (DC 12), *light;* 1st—*mage armor, magic missile, ray of enfeeblement* (+5 ranged touch).

Tactics: The guards here keep a sharp eye on the slope leading up to the cave. Upon spotting intruders, the bugbears fire their bows while the aranea casts *mage armor* on itself (improving its AC to 17). If the aranea gets a chance to cast a second spell before the enemy arrives, it uses *magic missile* on the closest foe.

When intruders enter the cave, all the guards fall back toward the exit. The bugbears stop at the base of the exit slope, draw their morningstars, and ready melee attacks. The aranea continues up the slope at its climb speed. When possible, it moves and uses its spells and webs against the intruders. It begins with *ray of enfeeblement* against fighting characters, then uses web attacks against those same foes. After that, it uses *magic missile* against enemies that aren't stuck in place by its webbing.

The aranea keeps fighting until reduced to 8 or fewer hit points, or until all the bugbears are killed. If either of these situations occurs, it flees toward area 2.

The bugbears fight to the death so long as the aranea stays around. If it flees or is killed or incapacitated, they surrender immediately.

Development: Noise from a fight here alerts the ettercap and the spiders in area 2.

Captured bugbears have an attitude of indifferent. If questioned, they claim that they were kidnapped and

THE CAVE OF SPIDERS
1
2
3
4
5
5a
6
7
8
9
10
West
East
20 feet

forced to guard the cave. A successful Intimidate check or a Diplomacy check that improves their attitude to helpful causes them to admit that they're working for Mettik. They can give a rough description of the complex, though they have detailed knowledge of only this area and areas 2 through 6.

If the PCs sneak past the guards without a fight, the bugbears here go to join any fight that breaks out in area 2.

2. CHECKPOINT (EL 8)

This area is about 40 feet square and has a 50-foot-square side chamber to the north. Read or paraphrase the following aloud, adjusting as needed if the characters are not approaching from area 1.

> Here the passage widens to form a chamber perhaps eight or nine paces square. The corridor continues on from the opposite side, and a larger chamber seems to open on the left.

Traps: The chamber's ettercap guardian has blocked the entrance with a sheet web.

Ettercap Sheet Web Trap: CR 2; mechanical; location trigger; repair reset; Search DC 15; Disable Device DC 15. Cost: —

Any approaching creature must succeed on a DC 20 Spot check to notice the web or stumble into it and become entangled. An entangled creature can escape with a DC 13 Escape Artist check or burst the web with a DC 17 Strength check. The web has 6 hit points and hardness 0, and it takes double damage from fire.

Creatures: An ettercap and two monstrous spiders lurk in the side passage.

Ettercap: hp 27; see *Monster Manual,* page 106.

Huge Monstrous Hunting Spiders: hp 52 each; see *Monster Manual,* page 289.

Tactics: The ettercap and the spiders stay out of sight in the side chamber, relying on the spiders' tremorsense to alert them to intruders. The ettercap has also strung a line of webbing from the sheet web into the side chamber, so that it knows when anything touches the web.

As soon as anyone enters the outer chamber, the monstrous spiders charge to the attack and the ettercap trots along behind, firing webs at any target to which it has a clear shot (but preferably spellcasters). If possible, the ettercap closes in on entangled characters and tries to bite them.

The whole trio fights to the death to defend the lair.

Development: Any fighting in area 1 alerts the creatures here. Likewise, if the party manages to sneak past area 1 without a fight, a combat in this chamber alerts the guards there. In that case, the bugbears join the combat, leaving the aranea to keep watch on the entrance.

3. SINKHOLE

This sinkhole is a natural feature of the complex.

> The corridor becomes slightly wider here, forming a more or less round chamber perhaps 30 feet in diameter. In the middle of the floor is a gaping sinkhole some 15 feet wide. A nasty, charnel smell rises from its depths.

The sinkhole is 20 feet deep. The smell results from the fact that the residents frequently throw their trash down here.

4. MAIN SHAFT (EL 9)

A steep and fairly slippery slope leads 20 feet down to a natural ledge. Below it is a natural vertical shaft about 20 feet wide and 100 feet deep. However, anyone falling into the shaft drops only 40 feet before hitting the platform at area 5.

> A precipitous slope of smooth, damp stone plunges down to a thin lip of rock, beyond which yawns a black abyss that could well be bottomless. On the far side of the drop stands a rickety wooden platform cluttered with bales and barrels. Over the platform stands some kind of wooden fortification supported by wooden stilts. Ladders lead from the main platform up to the overhead fortification and also down into the darkness.

The slope here has a Climb DC of 20. The "fortification" actually supports a wooden drawbridge that the guards stationed here can lower when they wish to let visitors cross. The bridge swings out to connect the top of the slope to the upper platform, so that welcomed guests don't have to climb the slope.

Creatures: Three bugbear warriors hide among the barrels and crates on the lower platform, and an aranea sergeant mans the upper platforms.

Bugbear Guards (3): hp 27 each; see area 1.

Aranea: hp 22; see area 1.

Tactics: All the guards stay out of sight until they hear a creature descending the slope to the east. The PCs might be able to bluff their way past, but all the guards are unfriendly and suspicious of strangers. If the PCs try to bluff or threaten the guards, or fail to

persuade them with a Diplomacy check, the aranea pretends to go along and extends the drawbridge. Once an intruder steps onto the bridge, however, the creature releases the mechanism and drops the intruder into the shaft. Since the drawbridge is higher than the stone lip at the bottom of the slope, the hapless victim falls 50 feet to area 5. The character can attempt a DC 15 Climb check to keep from falling, and anyone who hangs on can try to catch another character, as noted in the Climb skill description.

Otherwise, the creatures here use the same tactics as their counterparts in area 1 do, except that this group has cover (+4 AC, +2 Reflex saves) against attacks from the slope and the corridor from the west.

Development: Thanks to the acoustics down here, the guards don't notice any fighting in areas 1 and 2 (and vice versa). The creatures in area 5, however, can hear what's going on here pretty clearly (see Development in area 5 for details).

5. LANDING

A wooden ladder on this 40-foot-square platform leads 40 feet up to the platform at area 4. In addition, a wooden bridge spans the shaft, giving access to area 5a, where another ladder leads 20 feet down to another platform. There, a collection of coiled, knotted ropes allows a 30-foot descent to area 6.

Anyone falling to this point from area 4 strikes the bridge and takes appropriate falling damage (either 4d6 or 5d6 points, depending on the point at which the fall began). When the character hits the platform, the player must make a check against the platform's break DC (25) to determine whether it breaks. Roll 1d20 and add +1 for each 10 feet fallen and +1 for every size category larger than Medium that the falling character is. If the result exceeds the break DC, the character breaks through the platform, dropping another 40 feet to area 6 and taking another 4d6 points of damage from the fall. The character leaves a hole in the platform as big as his space.

Creatures: A bugbear always stands guard here.

Bugbear Guard: hp 27; see area 1.

Tactics: The guard here is primarily concerned with ensuring that no one attacks his companions in area 5a in their sleep. He uses the same general tactics as the bugbears in areas 1 and 4.

Development: The bugbear quickly notes any disturbances in area 4 or 6. If alerted, he takes 1 round to awaken someone in area 5a, then goes to join the fray, taking another 2 rounds to reach area 4 or 6.

Area 5a. Barracks

Read or paraphrase the following when the characters arrive.

> The walls of this chamber are stained with smoke. Eight straw beds, a crude wooden table, several stools, a fire pit, and crates and barrels of provisions constitute the furnishings.

Creatures: Sixteen bugbears live here, but only six are present at any one time. The rest are on duty elsewhere in the complex or away on a raid.

Bugbear Guards (8): hp 27 each; see area 1.

Tactics: The bugbears spend most of their free time sleeping. If disturbed, they roll out of bed, grab weapons, and try to meet the trouble head-on. They sleep in their chain shirts, but they need at least 1 round to gather up their bucklers and weapons.

Development: The sleeping bugbears are deaf to anything happening outside of this chamber or area 5. If awakened by the guard at area 5, they spend 1d4 rounds getting out of bed and getting their equipment in order before following their comrade toward whatever disturbance is afoot.

6. PRISON (EL 8)

To get here, the characters must fly or somehow drop down from area 5. Anyone who falls from area 5 lands here.

> A low hump of smooth stone, like a turtle's back, lies at the bottom of a vertical shaft. A corridor stretches off to the west. A second exit to the east is completely blocked by thick webbing.

Creatures: An ettercap and two monstrous spiders lurk in the passage here.

Ettercap: hp 27; see *Monster Manual,* page 106.

Huge Monstrous Hunting Spiders: hp 52 each; see *Monster Manual,* page 289.

Tactics: The ettercap and the two spiders remain out of sight in the passage to the west. Like their comrades in area 2, they rely on the spiders' tremorsense to note intruders. When prey comes within reach, the trio attacks, using the tactics described in area 2.

Development: If the PCs tear or burn away the webbing to the east, they find a horrid little chamber that Mettik uses as a prison and larder. At least half a dozen humanoids hang suspended from the ceiling in spider-silk cocoons, just like flies in a spider's web. All have succumbed to spider poison and lost most or all

their Strength scores. A lucky few can expect to be ransomed, but most will become spider food.

These unfortunates are in no condition to help the PCs, and they have no useful information. However, one prisoner is Genevieve de Guare, a human expert 5 who owns a merchant trading company. If rescued, she pays the party 5,000 gp that her agents would otherwise have paid to Mettik as ransom.

7. SMALL SHAFT

This area looks just like a plain corridor, but any character passing this point who can see the ceiling 20 feet overhead may make a DC 15 Spot check to notice the vertical shaft leading up to area 8.

A character who climbs the corridor wall must traverse at least 5 feet of ceiling to reach the shaft. The shaft is 10 feet wide and rises 30 feet to area 8. Its Climb DC is 20.

Development: If the party uses any artificial light in here, the guards in area 8 notice it. The guards also can hear the PCs talking or trying to ascend the shaft.

8. GUARDPOST (EL 8)

This chamber is similar to area 5a, except that the beds are round cushions about 4 feet across. They resemble beanbags, though they are actually stuffed with leaves.

The guards use a knotted rope to descend to area 7. They keep the rope coiled up in here and don't lower it until they need it.

Creatures: Eight araneas live here, but only four are present at any given time.

Araneas (4): hp 22 each; see area 1.

Tactics: Usually two araneas sleep while the other two keep watch. At the first sign of intrusion, one aranea wakes the others quietly, then scurries off to area 9 to warn Mettik. The araneas need only 1 round to awaken and get ready to defend the chamber.

If they can catch intruders climbing the shaft from area 7, the araneas use their *magic missile* and *ray of enfeeblement* spells. If the invaders manage to get into this room, the araneas avoid melee combat by climbing the walls. They keep up their spell assault and throw in a few web attacks where possible.

Development: As noted earlier, one aranea goes to area 9 to warn Mettik as soon as trouble arises. The messenger and Mettik arrive back here 1 round after Mettik completes his preparations (see the Development section for area 9).

9. METTIK'S CHAMBER (EL 9)

Mettik's chamber resembles areas 5a and 8, except that the furnishings are much better.

> This room appears to be an opulent bedchamber, except that the bed is a great, silk-covered cushion stuffed with down. A table and writing desk made from fine hardwood complete the ensemble, and an ornate lamp provides soft light.

Mettik has placed a *continual flame* spell on the lamp, which is made of silver and jade.

Creatures: Mettik lives here by himself.

Mettik: Male aranea sorcerer 5; CR 9; Medium magical beast (shapechanger); HD 3d10+9 plus 5d4+15; hp 52; Init +8; Spd 50 ft., climb 25 ft.; AC 18, touch 15, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +5; Grp +4; Atk or Full Atk +9 melee (1d6–1 plus poison, bite) or +9 ranged (0, web); SA poison, spells, web; SQ change shape, darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; AL CE; SV Fort +7, Ref +8, Will +9; Str 8, Dex 18, Con 17, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 21.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +13, Climb +13, Concentration +9, Diplomacy +9, Escape Artist +7, Intimidate +9, Jump +12, Listen +7, Spellcraft +6, Spot +7; Heighten Spell, Improved Initiative, Iron Will[B], Weapon Finesse.

Poison: Injury, Fortitude DC 16, initial damage 1d6 Strength, secondary damage 2d6 Strength.

Spells: Mettik casts spells as an 8th-level sorcerer. He prefers illusions and enchantments and avoids fire spells.

Web (Ex): In spider or hybrid form (see Change Shape, below), Mettik can cast a web up to six times per day. This ability is similar to an attack with a net but has a maximum range of 50 feet, with a range increment of 10 feet, and is effective against targets of up to Large size.

The web anchors the target in place, allowing no movement. An entangled creature can escape with a successful DC 20 Escape Artist check or burst the web with a successful DC 26 Strength check. The web has 6 hit points, 0 hardness, and takes double damage from fire.

Change Shape (Su): Mettik's natural form is that of a Medium monstrous spider. He can assume two other forms. The first is an elf. In this form, he always assumes the same appearance and traits, much as a lycanthrope does. The second form is a Medium, spider-humanoid hybrid. Changing form is a standard action.

In elf form, Mettik gains all the abilities of an elf (including elf traits) and has a speed of 30 feet. Mettik keeps his ability scores and can cast spells, but he cannot use webs or poison in humanoid form. In hybrid form, Mettik looks like a Medium humanoid at first glance, but a successful DC 18 Spot check reveals his

fangs and spinnerets. Mettik can use weapons and webs in this form.

Mettik remains in one form until he chooses to assume a new one. A change in form cannot be dispelled, nor does he revert to his natural form when killed. A *true seeing* spell, however, reveals his natural form if he is in humanoid or hybrid form.

Sorcerer Spells Known (6/8/7/6/4 per day; caster level 8th): 0—*dancing lights, daze* (DC 15), *detect magic, ghost sound* (DC 15), *mage hand, message, ray of frost* (+9 ranged touch), *read magic;* 1st—*charm person* (DC 16), *feather fall, magic missile, shield, shocking grasp* (+4 melee touch); 2nd—*Melf's acid arrow* (+9 ranged touch), *resist energy, see invisibility;* 3rd—*displacement, suggestion* (DC 18); 4th—*shout* (DC 19).

Languages: Common, Elven, Goblin, Sylvan.

Possessions: Bracers of armor +2, ring of protection +1, lesser metamagic rod (Silent Spell), *wand of scorching ray* (22 charges), 2 *potions of cure moderate wounds, potion of lesser restoration,* 2 *potions of magic fang,* strongbox key.

Tactics: Mettik spends most of his time here in his hybrid form, planning new raids and scheming to gather more loot. If caught in this chamber by himself, he calls for the guards in area 7 and does his best to stay out of reach. He uses his *shout* spell on as many foes as possible, then casts *displacement* on himself. After that, he uses *suggestion* on fighter-types (suggesting that they leave), then uses *shout* again, or perhaps *Melf's acid arrow* on a spellcaster.

If warned about a coming attack, Mettik prepares by casting *displacement, resist energy* (fire), *shield,* and *see invisibility* on himself. Then he goes to meet the foe, using tactics much like those noted above. If he can't use his *shout* spells without harming allies, he uses his wand instead.

Treasure: Mettik keeps a strongbox stuffed with loot from his previous capers. The box contains 2,000 gp, 500 pp, 10 garnets (100 gp each), and a golden vial with a ruby stopper (500 gp). In addition, the silver-and-jade lamp is worth 700 gp.

Strongbox: 4 in. thick; hardness 5; hp 48; break DC 25, Open Lock DC 25.

10. SPRING

To one side of this area lies a pool from which the denizens of the caverns draw their drinking water. Characters can reach this area by climbing the tangle of ropes and platforms leading up from the corridor below.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Once the PCs defeat Mettik, the bandits he has organized disperse and cease to pose a threat to anyone, at least for a time.

FURTHER ADVENTURES

Mettik and his bandits may be part of a far-flung cabal of similar groups with a more insidious plan. Their goal might involve political subversion, economic disruption, or outright invasion. In this case, the party should discover some clues about the cabal in Mettik's chamber.

If the PCs rescue Genevieve de Guare and wish to collect their 5,000-gp reward, they might have to do some extra work for it. Perhaps one of Genevieve's subordinates has seized control of the company in her absence. Not only does he refuse to pay, but he also tries to have Genevieve assassinated. Alternatively, perhaps Mettik has replaced Genevieve with an imposter—most likely an aranea that can use a *change self* spell.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Skip Williams keeps busy with freelance projects for several different game companies, and he served as the sage of *Dragon Magazine* for eighteen years. Skip is a codesigner of the D&D 3rd edition game and the chief architect of the *Monster Manual.* When not devising swift and cruel deaths for player characters, Skip putters in his kitchen or garden (rabbits and deer are not Skip's friends) or works on repairing and improving the century-old farmhouse that he shares with his wife, Penny, and a growing menagerie of pets.